PART I

Tigrinya and its Alphabet

TIGRINYA is one of the designated national languages of Eritrea and is probably the language most widely spoken there. It belongs to a family of related languages that A. L. Schlözer named the "Semitic" languages (1781). This family includes notably Arabic and Hebrew, as well as Aramaic and other Near Eastern languages like Ugaritic, which is known only from inscriptions. Tigrinya shows clearly the characteristic features of a Semitic language. The most important is the verb system, which has two "tenses," but several "aspects" (causative, intensive, reflexive, etc.). Another feature is the apparent derivation of related words from "roots" consisting of three consonants. For instance, ጸሓፊ *secretary;* መጽሐፍ *book;* ጸሓፈ *he wrote.*

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TIGRINYA GRAMMAR

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